Argentina Supplies Horses for the European Cannon

One-Half Million Argentine Cavalry Mounts at a Cost of $20,000,000—Big Prices for Horseflesh—Famous Stallions at $100,000 and Upward—Colt Auctions Where Yearlings Bring $3,000 Each—The Races of Buenos Aires and Their Enormous Receipts—The Richest Sporting Club in the World—How the Argentine Mares Are Killed for Their Hides and Tallow—The New Stock and the Great Stud Farms—The Cowboy of Argentina and How He Fights Duels.

BUENOS AIRES.

BUYERS from England and France are scouring Argentina for cavalry horses to be used in the war. The purchases are kept as quiet as possible, but it is said that orders for 200,000 horses have already been received, and that these orders will be duplicated in the near future. It is estimated that the sales will ultimately reach twenty million dollars. Thousands of horses have already been shipped and steamer loads of them are now moving out over the ocean on the road to sudden death. It is said that the average life of a horse on the battlefield is only three days, and it makes one's heart sick to think of the slaughter of such animals as this country is raising.

Argentina is noted as paying the highest prices for fine blooded stock, and this is so of horses as well as of cattle. I have already referred to the $25,000 bull which was sold here last year. Stallions have been sold at several times that. There is one now on the Las Ortigas stud farm that was brought in from England at a cost of more than $150,000. It is known as "Diamond Jubilee," and it won the triple event for the late King Edward. It was sold for thirty thousand guineas. Another famous horse, imported by Saturnino Unzue, came from France and it cost $60,000. Ormond was brought here from England, where he was purchased for nineteen thousand pounds, or $95,000. He remained for some time in Argentina and was then sent to the United States at a price of more than $100,000. Flying Fox sold for $185,000. The horse Cyllene was landed in Buenos Aires at a cost of $150,000, while Missel Thrush cost Dr. Benito Villanueva $75,000. There have been many mares imported at extraordinary prices, and some of the fine stallions from England have had a chance to return home at increased figures. It is said that an offer of double the original price paid for Cyllene was made with the idea of taking him back to England. If this is true the amount was $300,000, and, as the story goes, it was refused.

* * *

There is a sale of thoroughbred stock here every spring which brings in $1,500,000 and upward for the colts sold. Sometimes it runs as high as $2,000,000. I have the figures of the later sales from the Agricultural Society of Argentina. In 1907 the amount realized for 335 colts was more than $900,000, or on the average almost of $2,700 per animal. In 1909 the sales amounted to more than $1,500,000, and that for fourteen animals, while in 1910, 482 colts were sold for upward of $1,500,000. At that sale some of the colts brought as much as $12,000 each. In 1905 two yearlings were bid off at $13,000 each; and in 1910 one yearling sold for $16,000 and another for $19,000. During that same year one of Diamond Jubilee's colts brought $15,000 and another $13,000. Within a period of seventeen years the average price of yearlings at these sales has steadily risen. In 1903 it was $600, while since then it has risen to $2,450 per colt. These prices are for yearlings only, and they show what the Argentine has been doing to improve its horses of the thoroughbred strain. As it is now, there are about 20,000 thoroughbreds in the country, and there are something like 400 thoroughbred stallions and 3,000 bred mares in service, with an output of 1,500 pedigreed colts per annum.

These high-priced thoroughbreds are kept principally for racing and breeding purposes, but they are scattered all over the country and they have greatly improved the native horses. As to races, there is no place in the world where the sport is more popular. There are about 150 race meetings per annum in Buenos Aires, and last year more than 9,000 horses ran, and the number of actual races were more than a thousand. The amount of money bet was $35,000,000 in gold, showing an increase over any of the years preceding. Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars are often handled at a single meeting, and no race is run for less than $1,000, while some of the races bring as high as from $5,000 to $20,000. In one year the chief winning stable came out ahead in twenty-seven races, taking purses to the amount of $200,000. During that same year the total value of the stakes distributed was more than $1,000,000.

I wish I could take you out to the Hippodrome near Palermo Park and show you the races. They are held on Sundays and Thursdays, and also on all of the holidays. Every one goes and in the grandstand you may see the president and his cabinet, the chief officers of the army and navy, and all the world and his wife besides. The race track is a wonder. It is two miles in length and has an inner track for training purposes. The main track is of sand and earth. The grandstand will seat many thousands. I was told there were about 20,000 there the last day I attended and these people paid all the way from $1 to $7 entrance fees. The races are under the Jockey Club, which owns the track and manages it. It gets 10 per cent of the receipts, and this amounts to several million dollars a year. A large part of this sum is given to charity, but enough is left to make the Jockey Club the richest association of its kind in the world. The Jockey Club has its special compartment in the grandstand and this is supplied with elevators, and furnished with cafes and eating arrangements.

* * *

The betting at the Palermo races is on the pari-mutuel order, the tickets costing about one dollar in gold. They can be bought in lots of from one to 100 or more, and there is straight betting and place betting on every race. At the last meeting eighty-seven horses were entered and there were rivers of men and women going to and from the windows of the betting establishments. Buildings covering a half acre are devoted to pool selling, and it seemed to me that all were putting up some money on every race. All were wildly excited. As the horses neared the winning post, 20,000 people rose with a yell. The same emotions were displayed as these we see at one of our base ball games. The crowd was well dressed, but there were more poor than rich. There were many Italians and Spaniards and thousands of native Argentines.

It is now a third of a century since the Jockey Club was founded. It was started with the idea of improving the horses of the Argentine and at the same time of promoting good fellowship. The government became interested in it and the club received some of its property on the condition that it could be held only as long as it was used for races, and that if the races were stopped it should be returned. Today there is no probability that that property will ever go back to the government. The club has grown and it is now perhaps the most wonderful of its kind in the world. It has steadily increased in popularity and it has now more than 2,000 members, although its initiation fee is $1,500. The annual dues are $90 a year. The club is not a money-making institution as far as the members are concerned. Its enormous receipts go back into the club furnishings and charities and to the building up of horse spirit and race spirit. It has spent vast amounts on its club arrangements. The grandstand at Palermo cost $800,000 and the special accommodations there for the members of the club $150,000. The stand for the jockeys and trainers cost $75,000, and the ticket office where the betting is done $125,000. Altogether, the race track and its surroundings have cost more than $1,000,000.

The Jockey Clubhouse in Buenos Aires is one of the finest buildings of the city. During my stay I have had the good fortune to dine there in company with the American minister and a party of ten. We sat about a round table in a splendid little dining room, finer, I venture, than that of any palace in Europe, and later on we looked into the state dining room, which is one of the most beautiful in the world. It is lighted from above and the walls are covered with costly tapestries and carvings. The clubhouse has been decorated by famous artists, and it is a mass of treasures from one end to the other. Entering from Florida street, the great business center of the capital, you pass a celebrated statue of Diana by Falguieres, and then go up stairs of marble, with balustrades of onyx, to the second floor. Upon the walls are the paintings of such artists as Bonnat, Bouguereau and Royebet and there are statues by famous sculptors here and there.

* * *

Notwithstanding the beauties of the clubhouse, the members are not satisfied with it and they have decided to give it over to the Argentine government for use as a building for the state department or ministry of foreign affairs. They are about to build a new clubhouse on the Calla San Martin, not far from the Hotel Plaza. This building will face a beautiful park, and its site alone has cost $3,500,000. The man who sold the property bought it some years ago for less than $500,000; and the Jockey Club sale will give you some idea of how land is rising in Buenos Aires.

Returning to the demand for horses for the European cavalry, the supply of the Argentine horse flesh is more than one-third as large as that of the United States. According to the latest figures, the world's total of horses is about 80,000,000, and of these one-tenth are feeling on the Argentine pampas. The United States has about 21,000,000 horses and Russia has a like number. In round numbers Germany and Austria have about 6,000,000, France, 3,000,000, and Great Britain 2,000,000. Canada has about 2,300,000—Australia a like number, and Argentina about 8,500,000. During the Boer war many thousands of horses were shipped from Buenos Aires to South Africa and the outlook is that if the sea route can be kept open for the allies a large proportion of the present supply will go to Great Britain and France.

* * *

The origin of the Argentine horse is of especial interest to us. As you know, our hemisphere had no horses until after Columbus came; and the first horses of both North and South America were imported from Spain. They were descended from those produced by the Moors from the cross between the Barb and the Arabian. Some were sent to Mexico, where they ran wild, and formed the wild horses of our western plains. Others were brought to South America and some of the first came over in the sixteenth century. A part of the latter belonged to Pedro de Mendoza, who, when attacked by the Querrandi Indians, had to abandon his settlement on the pampas. He then left behind him five mares and seven stallions, and it is said that these twelve animals were the progenitors of the great troops of Argentine horses. The animals increased in such numbers, that the wild droves almost covered the plains. There were so many horses that mares and geldings were sold to the government for two or three shillings each to supply the Indians with horse flesh. Later tens of thousands of animals were killed for their hides and tallow, bringing from fifteen to twenty shillings a head and it was not until recent years that horses became worth from $50 and upward apiece. The early Argentines were too proud to ride mares and during the first quarter of the nineteenth century more than a half million mares were butchered for what they brought in horse hair, fat and hides. Now the mare is almost as valuable as the stallion and horse breeding is exceedingly profitable.

In riding over the country one sees large droves of horses feeding inside the great fenced inclosures and there is a steady importation of all kinds of fine animals, including the Clydesdales and Percherons or draft purposes. The number of horses is steadily increasing. It has more than doubled within the past twenty years, and it is estimated that there is still room here for many times the supply now on hand.

Indeed, the possibilities of Argentina in stock development are beyond conception. As it is now, less than one-seventh of the land is under cultivation, and I am told that 200,000,000 animals could be fed and still leave room for more.

The Criolla mare, which served as the base for the native horse stock of the republic, had excellent blood, and today it shows some evidences of its Arabian ancestry. It was dwarfed by being born and bred in the open without any other food than the native grasses. Still it is strong and willing and capable of extraordinary exertion. It is irregular in shape and color, ranging from the slender type to the short, stocky one, and from a dusky brown to a fantastic blossom color.

The native stock might have been improved by selection and brought back to its original excellence. I am told that some of the estancieros have tried it successfully and that if animals of the same breeds had been imported from Spain they might have renewed the old stock. The native horses, however, form excellent ones for breeding, although crossing them with the racing blood seems to take away their muscular strength and sturdiness and to make them nervous. For working cattle, the lassooers on horseback need brawny, quiet horses and not quick nervous ones. Crossed with the Percheron, Clydesdale and Shire the Criolla is a good, general purpose horse, fitted for draft or the carriage, and, crossed with the thoroughbred, it makes an animal which is especially fitted for cavalry purposes. The value of horses is steadily rising. Before the war began good carriage horses brought $500 a pair at auction, and light draft horses were sold for as much $316. North American mules brought about $400 each and Argentine mules half as much. Cavalry horses are now selling from $100 upward, many poor animals being among those shipped.

* * *

The same prejudice as formerly still exists among the natives in the use of mares as riding animals. The gaucho is ashamed to be seen riding them and many persons use them for draft purposes only.

I have been interested in the methods of horse-breaking in Argentina. On the great stud farms where fine stock is kept, the methods are much the same as in the United States, but out on the pampas, where the cowboys do as they please the horses are allowed to run free until they are four or five years old. They are then lassooed and saddled by force. The cowboy mounts the horse and gallops him under a shower of blows until he is conquered. It is much the same as the methods of our cowboys of the west.

And this brings me to the Argentine cowboy, or the native horseman and cattleman of the pampas. He is a cross of the Spaniard and Indian, and the Indian seems to predominate, although the Spaniard is always in evidence. The gaucho is at home upon horseback, and is always ready to ride over the plains and watch or drive cattle. He does not like to take care of sheep, and seems to think farm labor beneath him.

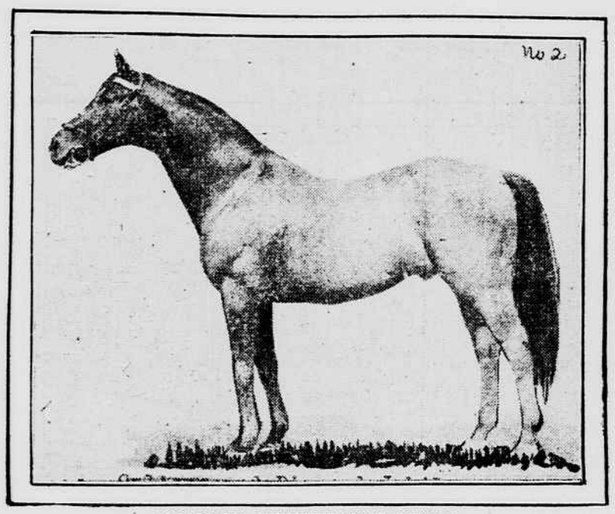
The Argentine cowboy looks much like an American Indian, but his cheekbones are not so high and his complexion is lighter in color. His eyes are coal black, and he usually has a full, black, heavy beard and straight, black hair. His ordinary costume is a slouch hat and a blanket with stripes, which is worn over his shoulder. He has another blanket worn about his waist, and pulled between the legs to the back. Under the lower blanket may be seen white drawers, that extend to the ankles and are tied there. He is proud of his dress, and his drawers are often edged at the bottom with lace, and red or blue slippers may cover his feet. He may often have on a belt of chamois leather decorated with silver buckles and bangles, and his saddle may be embroidered with silver, with silver stirrups attached.

* * *

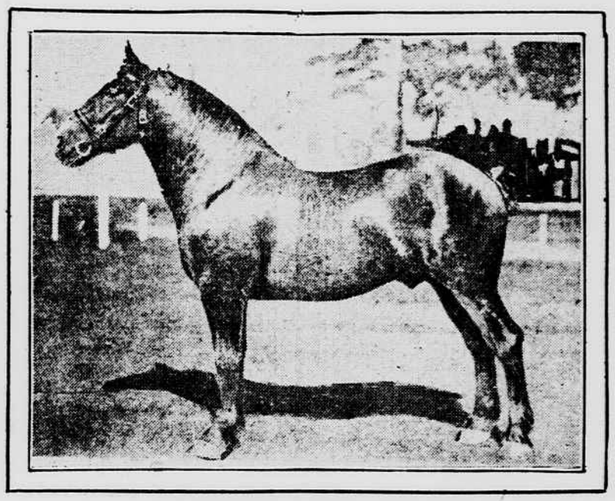
You can see the homes of the gauchos almost anywhere on the pampas. They are rude huts with doors so low that you have to stoop to enter them. The floor of the ordinary house is of earth and its furniture is a bed, a table and one or two seats, the latter often being the skulls of bullocks. The most of the cooking is done over the fire. The chief food is meat cooked over the coals, and the gaucho bastes the roast with the juice as it cooks. One of his favorite dishes is carne concuero, which means cooked in the skin. The meat is wrapped up tightly in the hide of the animal from which it comes and thus cooked. The skin keeps in the juices and the result is delicious. The gaucho drinks mate, a tea made from the leaves of a tree that grows best in Paraguay. He takes this whenever he can get it and always the first thing in the morning. Mate is both a stimulant and a food, and it enables one to go for a long time without other nourishment. It is used everywhere throughout Argentina.

Every gaucho carries a knife. This is a foot long, and it is used both for eating and also for fighting or to avenge an insult. When two gauchos have a dispute they sometimes settle it with their knives; and in olden times it was customary for them to fight with their left legs tied together, each man kneeling upon the right knee, and facing the other. Over one arm of each combatant was a blanket, used as a guard, and in the other was his knife. At the drop of a handkerchief the two men began to stab at each other, and they continued until one was mortally wounded. Today the ypical gaucho is changing. He is gradually becoming civilized, and, as the country becomes more and more settled he will be a thing of the past.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.



"DIAMOND JUBILEE" COST $150,000.



PERCHERON HORSE, BRED IN ARGENTINA.

HOW THE GAUCHOS BREAK COLTS IN THE ARGENTINE.

A GAUCHO DUEL.

PRESERVING AN ATMOSPHERE OF DAYS GONE BY AT MOUNT VERNON

"PARDON me, sir, but can you tell me whose house this used to be?"

It was at Mount Vernon. The speaker was a well dressed, intelligent-looking man, apparently a prosperous small-town merchant, and he was accompanied by an equally well dressed and intelligent-appearing woman.

The question was addressed to Mr. James Young, the assistant superintendent of the Mount Vernon estate. In his twenty-eight years of service Mr. Young has heard many curious questions, but this one was rather more astonishing than usual.

* * *

Mr. Young is courteous—they all are at Mount Vernon. After a momentary struggle with his vocal apparatus to compel it to function properly, he mildly asked in return:

"You have heard, have you not, of Gen. George Washington?"

"Yes," said the visitor, "of course, I have."

"Well," went on Mr. Young, "this was his home. It was purchased many years ago by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, which has since maintained it."

"You must think I am an awful fool," said the visitor, apologetically, "but I didn't know. My wife and I are on our first visit to Washington. We wanted a trolley ride, so we simply got on a car which brought us here. We have been wandering through the grounds. They are so wonderfully beautiful that I became curious to know more about the place."

Then he learned, and at length. Presently he and his wife were seen at the tomb of Washington, their attitude reverential, the spell of the Mount Vernon atmosphere upon them.

Here curious how this spell grips the visitors. High or low, rich or poor, educated or ignorant, they all seem to feel its influence. They wander through that quaint, dignified old mansion in awe, their voices hushed. Curiously they examine the coach house and the other buildings of the old plantation, marveling at the evidences they bear of the self-sustaining character of the place in the old days when spinning house, smoke house, blacksmith shop, carpenter and cabinet maker shops were necessary adjuncts of every country home. The visitors find much interest in the coach in which Washington traveled and they all glory in the charm of the vistas from the mansion proper.

* * *

But everywhere they go they move as if on holy ground.

Before the tomb it does not always require the grave-toned admonition of old Charles, the colored guard, "Hats off to de general," to secure this mark of respect.

Though about an eighth of a million visitors pass through the Mount Vernon gates each year, cases of vandalism, or attempts at vandalism, are rare. And unseemly behavior on the estate is almost unknown.

Perhaps the attitude of those in charge, by power of example, helps; for not all who come are fully aware of the historic and sentimental significance of Mount Vernon. The case of the small town business man shows this. The men who administer the estate are all veterans in the service, all steeped in Mount Vernon lore, all earnest in the Mount Vernon creed, which is to maintain the place precisely as it was in the days of George Washington.

High priests of the temple could not be more earnest, more reverential in their work. Sit for an hour in the office, a detached building on the north of the property where Gen. Washington kept his books and accounts and met his foremen and overseers, and talk with Mr. Harrison H. Dodge, the resident superintendent, or Mr. James Young, the assistant superintendent, and you absorb at least something of their intense devotion to Mount Vernon.

Or draw one of the grizzled, grave and kindly guards into conversation—no difficult task—and note the great store of knowledge of Gen. Washington and Mount Vernon they possess—how graphically they reconstruct the life of the old days. It is a liberal education in American history they owe to the visitor.

Since July 15, 1885, Harrison H. Dodge has been resident superintendent of the estate, having been elected in that year by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association to the position. That association, by the way, is nation wide in character, made up of a regent, who is the executive, and a vice regent for each state. Some thirty states are represented in the organization.

Not long after he took charge of Mount Vernon, Mr. Dodge selected James Young of Washington as assistant superintendent. One or the other always is on the place; most of the time both of them. At the time of his appointment Mr. Dodge was a young banker in Washington. But all his life since has been given to the care and preservation and study of the estate which he directs.

* * *

An easy and light task? By no means, if one is to live up to the high ideals both Mr. Dodge and Mr. Young cherish. "Did Washington have this so? Did he have this particular building painted in this particular color? Were these steps here in his day?" Such questions they are constantly asking themselves. To secure the answers they ever are at work in research, and so are the ladies of the association.

Only a few years ago did the association gain access to the Washington diaries, now in the Library of Congress, and have copies made for their own use. These diaries proved a mine of information and resulted in numerous minor restorations being made.

The whole country, historical collections everywhere, the preserved letters of Washington's cotemporaries and visitors, have been ransacked for information, down to the tiniest detail.

As an example, only recently Mr. Dodge, in showing a visitor through the mansion, called attention to the wall paper in the banquet room at the north end of the structure, and told the story of it. For years, having only tradition to go by, the management had a certain type of paper on these walls. Then, in clearing it off for renewal not long ago, far underneath layers of old paper and paint, there was uncovered an ancient paper.

Research in all the multitude of source material identified this paper as that put on by Washington himself. A sample was removed and sent to a manufacturer, who duplicated it exactly. Henceforth that is the paper which will be used in this room.

Diaries and letters show that Washington ordered this particular pattern of paper for the banquet room in anticipation of a visit from the Marquis de Lafayette. It was being put on the walls one day when the marquis suddenly arrived, hours ahead of the time he was expected. The lack of preparation, the disorder of the house incident to the repapering, could not be concealed from him.

It tickled the humor of the distinguished Frenchman. "Let me help," he persisted, and so he, Washington himself and several more of the company donned huge aprons and hilariously engaged in a papering bee. And, what is more, they did a thorough and complete job.

* * *

Recently it became necessary to reshingle the house. And here Mr. Dodge learned some more facts about the structure about which he is presumed to know more than any man living.

When Lawrence Washington built the villa in 1743 he covered the roof with cypress shingles, quite narrow ones with the weather end rounded. Then, in 1785, George Washington made extensive repairs and improvements, extending the building somewhat, and hence had to use new shingles. Those he selected were also of cypress, but broader.

"He found," said Mr. Dodge, in relating the fact, "that many of the 1743 shingles were very well preserved, so he used them over again, turning them over in relaying."

The roof remained untouched until 1860, when the association had the east portico rebuilt and a tin roof laid on a steeper pitch. This was done by raising the side next the mansion as high as the base line of the dormer windows. In doing this the extension lapped over and concealed that portion of the mansion roof below the dormers, leaving the original shingling of 1743 and 1785 undisturbed.

Late in 1913 the leaky condition of the roof compelled reshingling. This disclosed the economy worked by George Washington in turning over the old shingles, and it also disclosed the fact that the old roof was painted in the same color as that used in recent years.

The new shingles put on in 1913 were carefully made at Lake Waccaman, N. C., of cypress on the 1743 model, the butts being rounded to conform to the old style. But—and here Mr. Dodge departed for the time from the George Washington tradition—they were all soaked in a creosote preservative.

Today one will find in Mr. Dodge's office samples of the three types of shingles—1743, 1785 and 1913. To the observer there is little difference. The 1743 shingles show on one side a slight thinning, the work of the weather from 1743 to 1785, and on the other side a bit deeper weathering, resulting from exposure from 1785 to 1913. The 1785 shingles show very little wear.

In uncovering the roof it was feared that some of the timbers would be found decayed. Singularly enough, and as a tribute to early builders and the character of the timber used, very little strengthening was found necessary anywhere.

"Isn't the fire risk here very great?" is a query put every day to Mr. Dodge or Mr. Young by some visitor anxious for the complete preservation of this national shrine and appalled by the fact that all the buildings are of wood. Then the anxious one is shown something. Who would suspect that the peaceful and innocent-looking sun dial in the circle at the west entrance concealed a vault containing four chemical engines with hose sufficient to reach the surrounding buildings? For water pressure an electric motor at the river and an instantaneous oil fuel engine, driving a triple pump at the distributing station is capable of delivering several effective streams at once.

The concealment of this fire apparatus is in keeping with similar concealments that are practiced everywhere on the place to prevent a jarring note of modernity obtruding itself. The casual visitor even in the depths of winter—for visitors ever go to Mount Vernon whatever the weather—never notes whence comes the heat that keeps all the buildings comfortably warm when the temperature outside is low.

George Washington had to depend on open fires. Today a concealed hot-water heating plant underground some distance from the house pumps heat to all the buildings. From the cellar the heat rises through the fireplaces to warm the rooms. Only in two places in the mansion are radiators exposed. One is in the banquet hall, where doors flanking the fireplace created such a draft as to overcome the heat. This necessitated placing an unobtrusive radiator, unnoticed by most visitors, against one of the walls.

* * *

On the stairway the heating pipes are placed at the junction of the treads and the rises and few who mount the stairs know that they are there.

This care to keep the incongruous out of sight extends to the office, even. Here the telephone, an extension phone, can be found only by search, for it is hidden under a table.

In this office, by the way, the great, built-in cabinets used by George Washington for his files and papers, today are in use by the management of the estate for precisely the same purpose.

"What seems to interest the visitors to Mount Vernon most?" is a question put to Mr. Dodge, Mr. Young and several of the attendants, and they all made the same reply: the tomb, perhaps, more than anything else, but every part and every room attracts its due attention.

Questions by visitors, such as "Whose house was this?" are few in number. The great majority of visitors come with some knowledge of Washington and his country seat.

What all the employes at Mount Vernon comment on, however, is that such a large number of the visitors come from a distance. From Washington and nearby cities few, by comparison, come. "But that," remarked one of the attendants, "is not remarkable. I have lived in the vicinity of the city of Washington for nearly sixty years, and never until last week did I visit the Washington Monument and go to its top."

The most impressed and the most eager visitors, in the experience of the staff, come from abroad and from the west. No distinguished foreigner ever visits Washington in an official capacity but that he journeys to Mount Vernon to pay silent tribute to the father of his country. And few other educated foreigners visit the National Capital in any capacity without journeying to Mount Vernon. The spirit in which they go is the spirit in which aliens visiting Paris go to the tomb of Napoleon.

* * *

The studious and more intelligent Americans, especially those from New England, visiting Mount Vernon, aside from their sentiments of pride and patriotism, display an intense interest in and curiosity about the every day life and habits and manners of the period in which Washington lived, matters upon which Mount Vernon, maintained as it is, sheds much light.

They learn from those in charge about the manner of extending hospitality in those days. They are told of how word would be sent by colored messengers through all the Maryland and Virginia countryside of a coming house party, of how some would come by sloops, frequently becalmed and delayed on the Potomac, and others by coach, until the great house would be filled, whether it be the Marshall house, on the Maryland side, or the Washington house, on the Virginia side, or any one of numerous other homes. And then would come the stately dinner, and the evening of dancing and shifts that would be made to provide all the guests with sleeping quarters. These students of Washingtonia at Mount Vernon have it all, even to the tiny gossip, at tongues' end, and, when they find an appreciative listened, they tell it.

Nothing, however, they say, is comparable with the devotion and lively curiosity manifested by many of the western visitors. Here is what a western visitor the other day told Mr. Young, assistant superintendent:

"I don't suppose you, who have lived so long in the atmosphere of Mount Vernon, can understand the feelings with which we of the west approach Mount Vernon, Washington, Virginia, the whole historic region. Never, until I came to Washington the other day, had I been east of the Mississippi river. In my childhood I was taught about George Washington just as I was taught about Jesus Christ. I was taught about the Holy Land and about the thirteen original colonies. All were equally remote; all, so far as my child mind could grasp the stories, might as well have been the same. I mean no irreverence by this. I am simply giving the association of child impressions.

* * *

"As I grew up, of course, I learned to differentiate, but still George Washington and the historic spots of my native country were remote. The fathers of the republic and the regions in which they lived and labored and fought were far removed from the pioneer west of my day. An atmosphere of romance and color totally unlike anything we had in the west surrounded them.

"You can know nothing of the thrill I, as a man grown, experienced the other day when, speeding on the train through the Mohawk valley of New York, I saw an ancient stone house, the first I ever saw. 'It must have stood there even before the revolution,' I said to myself, and my breath came fast.

"In Washington the White House, the Capitol, the quaint old buildings on lower Pennsylvania avenue moved me deeply. They are the places I have read about, pictured to myslf, dreamed of through all my life. When I stood in the Supreme Court room I whispered to myself that here was where Webster and Hayne debated. It seemed hardly possible.

"And now here, at Mount Vernon, I feel as if I had stepped into the age of the fathers—back all those generations into the period when lived the men who laid the foundations of our government, men who all my life I have idealized and glorified. Never did they seem so human to me as they do today.

"You of the east who are privileged to live amid historic surroundings cannot realize all those surroundings mean to the westerners. You must become accustomed to it all, even when you do appreciate it, as you gentlemen here at Mount Vernon evidently do, but to the westerner a visit to Mount Vernon is an experience the memory of which is to be cherished through life and to be related to those of our neighbors who have not been so fortunate."

* * *

Mr. Dodge and those associated with him have succeeded in maintaining the ancient atmosphere of Mount Vernon. What they seek to do is expressed in the latest annual report of the association:

"The struggle to keep Mount Vernon 'the home of Washington' is ever before us. It is not enough that restorations are complete. The conduct of the estate must be in accord with the tastes and ideas of Washington, not those of the present day."

And so in farm and garden, in all the buildings, in the arrangement of the furniture as well as in the arrangement of the shrubbery to preserve the vistas, careful study precedes any decision. A recent instance is the matter of the stones with which the floor of the east portico is paved. These stones, the record shows, were brought from England. The stones, although they have been turned, are wearing thin.

Hence, for several years a search has been going on to secure exactly the same kind of stone to replace the old ones when they break. Through the aid of an English visitor, J. Allen Howe of the Geological Museum in Jermyn street, London, the original quarry has been located. It is known as the Sandwich quarry on the estate of Lord Lonsdale, near Whitehaven in Cumberland.

The manager of the estate testifies that "Whitehaven's own boats, I can prove, traded to Virginia for tobacco about 100 or 150 years ago. * * * This stone went out as ballast in the boats." The manager thinks that on account of their size—they are about twelve inches square—the stones were taken from some cathedral or old castle floor. A sample from the Sandwich quarry has been obtained, and it matches the old stones in the pavement perfectly. So, as the need arises, the new blocks will be imported from the quarry.

In this way such restorations as are necessary are made from time to time. The result is the Mount Vernon today, unchanged from the Mount Vernon of 130 years ago, a peaceful, restful, dignified country estate, every line and item of which is characterized by that simplicity and purity that are the acme of good taste. It all seems to breathe the very spirit of Washington himself.

ASHMUN BROWN.

HARRISON H. DODGE,
Resident superintendent of Mount Vernon.